

Sūrah Mujādalah

Central Theme and Relationship with the Previous Sūrah

The previous *sūrah* ended on the answer to the objection raised by the People of the Book against *jihād*. The reason for giving this answer was that the objections raised by the opponents of the Prophet (sws) would be picked up by the Hypocrites and secretly spread among the Muslims in order to weaken their faith and repress their zeal for *jihād*. It seems that these activities of the Hypocrites had gained great momentum at the time of revelation of this *sūrah*. The situation demanded that this clandestine propaganda be checked. Consequently, in this *sūrah*, the Hypocrites are severely reprimanded for indulging in such subversive activities, and in order to curb them, Muslims are also directed to adopt certain measures. Simultaneously, by presenting a very effective practical example, Muslims are taught how to deal with a difficulty they might face in following Islam: they should sincerely present the issue to the Prophet (sws). It is hoped that the Almighty will find out a way for them. The people who initiate a propaganda campaign against Islam by making an excuse of a hypothetical or real difficulty they might be facing are the ones who want to open a war-front with God and His Prophet (sws). Such people should remember that they will be humiliated. It is the incontestable decision of God that success and dominance is only reserved for God and His prophets.

Analysis of the Sūrah's Discourse

Verse (1-4): A reference is made to an incident in which a pious woman had to face a severe difficulty regarding a religious issue; instead of becoming frustrated and showing distrust in the Almighty, she presented her case before Him and His Prophet (sws) with all the confidence and purity of intention she could muster. The Almighty resolved her difficulty and set her forth as an example in the Qur'ān: the example of a person who adopted the correct attitude when troubles came her way. This was in sharp contrast with the attitude of the Hypocrites who would show hostility and indulge in a covert and hostile propaganda against the Almighty and His Prophet (sws) when a particular directive of the *sharī'ah* proved adverse to their desires and wishes.

Verses (5-8): Disgust is expressed at the attitude of the people who,

instead of showing trust in the Almighty and His Prophet (sws), were busy whispering evil suggestions to others and maligning the cause of Islam. They were showing disrespect to the Prophet (sws) and were presenting the lenience the Almighty was showing them by not punishing them as a proof of their correct attitude. They are warned that they shall not only be humiliated in this world as history testifies, but will also face a grievous torment in the Hereafter.

Verses (9-10): Muslims have been forbidden from sin and excesses and directed that their secret conversations should not be against the Prophet (sws); their intimate exchanges should be clean and pious. They are told that they should ignore the whispering campaign which the Hypocrites have launched against them, for such whispering cannot harm anyone unless the Almighty permits it. It is befitting for them to trust their Lord and rest assured instead of worrying and being aggrieved by such insinuations. The Almighty shall protect them from the evil of the evil-doers.

Verses (11-12): The believers have been directed to follow certain manners when they are in the company of the Prophet (sws), and forbidden to carry out clandestine conversation when they are gathered around him. Certain emergency directives are given to curb the whispering campaign undertaken by the Hypocrites.

Verse (13): After the achievement of the desired results, the emergency directives have been repealed and the believers have been directed to establish those forms of worship which shall put an end to this malady of whispering campaign and secret conversation; these forms have been spelled out for them.

Verses (14-22): An indication is made of the fact that the Hypocrites are actually the agents of the Jews who have incurred the wrath of the Almighty; their real allegiance rests with them. Their glibness and their trait of swearing during conversation effectively conceals their real character and they are able to outwardly show themselves as Muslims. Their allegiance is actually with the enemies of Islam; they have been overwhelmed by the love of wealth. Satan has made them unmindful of Allah and they have joined his party to impair and obstruct the Prophet's mission; ultimately their efforts shall fizzle out, for it is the absolute judgement of the Almighty that only He and His prophets shall always prevail. True believers are those who sever their ties of relationship from the enemies of God and the Prophet (sws) even if they are their fathers, sons, brothers and tribesmen. The Almighty shall only be happy with such people; they are the people of His party and only they shall achieve success.

Section I (Verses 1-4)

Text and Translation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ (١) الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ نِّسَائِهِمْ مَا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا
 اللَّائِي وَلَدْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُورٌ (٢) وَالَّذِينَ
 يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِّسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا ذَلِكَ
 تُوعَظُونَ بِهِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ (٣) فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ
 أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَاِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ذَلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتِلْكَ
 حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٤)

God has heard the words of the lady who would argue with you about her husband and was complaining to God and God was hearing the conversation of both of you. God hears all and observes all. (1)

Those of you who do *zihār* with their wives, these wives do not become their mothers. Their mothers are those only who have given birth to them. In fact, such people utter words which are very despicable and false. And God pardons and forgives. And those who do *zihār* with their wives, and afterwards return to what had been prohibited, then freeing a slave is required before they touch each other again. This is what you are being counselled of. And God is aware of all that you do. Thus, he who has no slave available to him shall fast two successive months before they touch one another. And he who does not have the capacity to do this shall feed sixty of the destitute. This is enjoined on you so that you may have deep faith in God and His Messenger. These are the bounds set by God and for the disbelievers there is a grievous punishment. (2-4)

Explanation

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ^(١)

The words *قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ* do not merely signify hearing as is evident from the occasion of the discourse; they also signify acceptance. It has been used in this meaning in the Qur'ān, and this meaning is common in the Arabic language as well. In our language too, hearing is used to refer to acceptance.

Before the word *تُجَادِلُكَ*, a suppression of an incomplete verb has occurred as per the general principles of Arabic language. It is evident from this that the lady whose incident is mentioned here came many a time to the Prophet (sws) to relate it.

The word *مجادلة* is used in the Qur'ān in both its positive and negative meanings. When used negatively, it refers to quibble and to quarrel. When used positively, it refers to convince someone through affection, pleading, insistence and fondness; here the element of quarrel is present too; however, this quarrel is with love and trust the way children try to convince their elders by quarrelling with them all the while trusting their affection. The best example of such an affectionate quarrel is that of Abraham (sws) which he had with His Lord regarding the people of Lot (sws). The Almighty praised it a lot. I have already referred to it in this *tafsīr*. The argument of the lady mentioned in this verse was of precisely this nature as well. I could not find an appropriate translation of this word in Urdu; so I have rendered it as *jhagarnā* (to quarrel). However, this quarrel has a special connotation, and in this connotation it is used in Urdu as well on the condition that a person realizes its occasion and background.

Narratives mention the name of the lady referred to in this verse as Khawlah bint Tha'labah. Her husband's name was Aws bin Šāmit al-Anṣārī. Once when he was angry, he uttered the following words to his wife: *أَنْتَ عَلَيَّ كَظْهَرُ أُمِّي* (if I now become sexually intimate with you, it will be as if I came near my mother for this purpose). In the days of *jāhiliyyah*, such words would separate a wife permanently. For this reason, Khawlah (rta) became very anxious about her fate and that of her children if this separation took place. So, she presented her case before the Prophet (sws), and with insistence and assertion pleaded to him to solve her issue. Since the Prophet (sws) did not have before him a clear-cut guidance in this regard, it seems that he delayed responding to her.

1. God has heard the words of the lady who would argue with you about her husband and was complaining to God and God was hearing the conversation of both of you. God hears all and observes all.

For this reason, she had to come to the Prophet (sws) time and again to resolve her issue.

It is also evident from the Qur'ān that in this matter Khawlah (rta) defended her husband to some extent. It is evident from some narratives that Aws (rta) had a harsh disposition as a result of which he uttered this inappropriate sentence. He had absolutely no intention of divorcing his wife; for this reason, both husband and wife became very worried. Khawlah (rta) must have also related this situation to the Prophet (sws) so that it could become fully clear that while uttering this sentence, her husband had no intention of divorcing her. He uttered it inadvertently out of anger.

Zihār is also mentioned in Sūrah Ahzāb; however, that mention is only as a passing reference by the words: وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمُ اللَّائِي تُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ (٤:٣٣) (He does not regard the wives whom you divorce through *zihār* as your mothers, (33:4)). Nevertheless, in the first place, it is not necessary that Sūrah Ahzāb should have been revealed before Sūrah Mujādalah. In the second place, even if it was revealed before it, what is only evident from these words is that by pronouncing *zihār*, a person's wife does not become his mother; they do not say what responsibility such a declaration entails and what a person should do for its atonement. So even though this verse of Sūrah Ahzāb had been revealed to the Prophet (sws), he could only have decisively resolved the issue of Khawlah (rta) after being divinely guided. So he waited until a revelation came to guide him. Finally, he was provided this divine guidance and because of her affectionate complaints not only was her problem resolved, this guidance also showed the way out to countless men and women from this absurd ritual. Consequently, by praising her in the Qur'ān, the Almighty eternally preserved her affectionate complaint, and guided people that when they face some hardship in a matter of religion they should present it before their Lord the way this believing lady had done; like the Hypocrites, one should not make it an excuse to raise objections, launch a whispering campaign and a matter of confrontation with God and His Prophet (sws).

وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمْ: Since this complaint was specifically addressed to God, He kept on listening to it with great affection and attention. He finally resolved the issue of Khawlah (rta). It is evident from this that those who speak out their problems to God should rest assured that the Almighty listens to them very attentively. He sees and knows all. And when He listens and also has power over everything, why should a person lose hope and harbour evil thoughts in his mind?

Here it should be kept in mind that like the case of material and mundane hardships, the most successful way in combating spiritual and intellectual confusions is to present them to God. At times, a person is

faced with an intellectual problem which seems irresolvable to him, and this raises a lot of doubts about religion. In such circumstances, if a person presents his problem to God and asks guidance from Him, God willing, he will be blessed with peace of mind on the condition that he patiently asks God's help. True seekers always adopt this behaviour; however, the mean and the hasty instead of adopting this behaviour either make doubts and superstitions into religion itself or by making religion an object of objection show confrontation to it. The result of this is what is stated later in this *sūrah*.

الَّذِينَ يَظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ نَسَائِهِمْ مَا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّائِي وَلَدْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ
لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُورٌ غَفُورٌ²

In this regard, the first principle guidance is that by uttering such words, wives do not become mothers of such people. Their mothers are only those who have given them birth. These mothers are prohibited to them in marriage because of this relationship and this prohibition is a natural and an eternal one. Such a prohibition cannot be regarded to be present in some other woman merely because a person had likened her or a limb of her to his mother. Those who utter such words utter what is vicious and false on which they are indeed worthy of being punished; however, this utterance does not make the wife prohibited to a person.

The implication of the words وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُورٌ غَفُورٌ is that if a person while being overcome with anger uttered such an evil and untruthful statement and later realized his folly, then God is Gracious and Forgiving. Consequently, in the case under discussion as well, since the perpetrator of this mistake realized the wrong he had done, the Almighty forgave him.

It needs to be kept in mind here that in the age of *jāhiliyyah*, just as the Arabs had given adopted children the same status as real children, similarly in case of *zihār* too, they were extremely strict. If a person uttered such words for his wife, then as per the general practice she would become prohibited to him like his own mother. Never could a person have sexual intimacy with his wife after this. If any person dared to do it, he was looked upon as a person who had married his mother. For this reason Islam, while reforming such unnatural customs, has at all places directed man's attention to put each thing at its place as prescribed by the laws of nature. He should not try to pervert this natural religion by

2. Those of you who do *zihār* with their wives, these wives do not become their mothers. Their mothers are those only who have given birth to them. In fact, such people utter words which are very despicable and false. And God pardons and forgives.

making such changes. This issue has been discussed at length in the *tafsīr* of Sūrah Ahzāb. Here too, while reforming this evil custom in order to silence the objectors it is said in the very beginning that such inappropriate utterances do not change the laws of nature. A wife does not become a person's mother merely by such a false utterance of his.

A question arises about a declension in the expression: مَا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ. Why is the word أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ declined in the accusative. In my opinion, the word مَا here connotes لَيْسَ. Examples of this usage exist in the Qur'ān. Thus it is said in Sūrah Hāqqah: (٤٧:٦٩) فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ (then no one among you could have withheld Us from this, (69:47)).

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَا
ذَلِكَ تُوَعِّظُونَ بِهِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ³

Mentioned in this verse is the way out for a person who has done *zihār* with his wife, and wants to undo it: he must liberate one slave as atonement of this sin.

The implication of the verse is that though his wife will not become prohibited to him as his mother is, yet since marriage and divorce have lasting effects on social life, in their matter both solemnity and jest carry great significance. As a result, such a person should be admonished and punished in some way so that he remains careful in future, and others too learn a lesson from this. Thus it is essential for him to liberate a slave before he becomes intimate with his wife. The word used here is رَقَبَةً (neck). It is evident from this word that no distinction is to be made in this regard between a slave-man and a slave-lady. Some jurists do not even make a distinction between a Muslim and non-Muslim in this regard. Whoever is available can be used to atone for the sin. The only thing is that if a Muslim slave is available, he should be preferred.

Here it needs to be kept in consideration that the emancipation of a slave has been stated as the first option. If a slave is not available the two other alternatives mentioned later can be opted for. This reinforces my view stated in Sūrah Nūr that Islam opened the doors to slave emancipation in the widest sense. So much so, it regarded this emancipation to be an atonement of small or big sins so that the campaign of slave liberation is given impetus from every aspect.

There is a little ambiguity in the words: ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا. The reason for

3. And those who do *zihār* with their wives, and afterwards return to what had been prohibited, then freeing a slave is required before they touch each other again. This is what you are being counselled of. And God is aware of all that you do.

this ambiguity is that what they allude to is self-obviously evil. The Qur'ān has also regarded it to be مُنْكَرٌ and زُورٌ. It was inappropriate to mention an evil in explicit terms. For this reason, the Qur'ān referred to it in vague terms. The meaning of the expression thus is that if they want to do the same thing which they had prohibited upon themselves like the prohibition of their mothers, then they must liberate a slave before being intimate with their wives.

This ambiguity, in the first place, also stands clarified by the words: مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَّا. Moreover, this very style is employed in verse eight of this sūrah: ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهَوْا عَنْهُ (then do what they have been forbidden). Similarly, here too, it will mean that they undertake what they had pledged to abstain from or which they had forbidden upon themselves. A very exquisite example of the ambiguity found in the use of قَالُوا and قَالَ etc keeping in view brevity and eloquence can be seen in verse eight of Sūrah Maryam. For more details, its tafsīr can be looked up.

The stress in the words مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَّا is that this atonement should be made before being intimate with the wife. In this next verse, this condition is repeated which shows its emphasis. For this reason, it is not allowed that a person while being overcome with desire should be intimate with his wife before he has atoned for it. If this is done, then it would be considered as exceeding the limits of God, as will be mentioned later.

The words ذَلِكُمْ تُوعَظُونَ بِهِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ sound a warning that the advice being handed out is from God. If a person secretly disobeys it, then he should remember that God is well aware of all his deeds. The implication is that if He is aware of these deeds, then the perpetrators of these deeds will not be able to save themselves from His grasp. The word ذَلِكُمْ refers to all what is said above. In other words, neither should a person insist on the custom of *zihār* belonging to the age of *jāhiliyyah* nor invent excuses and legal subterfuges to escape the directive of atonement; each directive must be obeyed in its true spirit. This will bring success both in this world and in the next.

فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَّا فَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَإِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ذَلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ^{4(٤)}

If a slave is not available to a person, he should fast consecutively for

4. Thus, he who has no slave available to him shall fast two successive months before they touch one another. And he who does not have the capacity to do this shall feed sixty of the destitute. This is enjoined on you so that you may have deep faith in God and His Messenger. These are the bounds set by God and for the disbelievers there is a grievous punishment.

two months, and if this is not possible for him, he should feed sixty indigent people. In these times, only these two options practically remain after the eradication of slavery which has been achieved exactly as per the intent of Islam.

It is evident from the word مُتَتَابِعِينَ (consecutive) that if before the termination of two months, a person becomes intimate with his wife, then he will have to begin the count again.

Here, though the condition of أَنْ يَتَمَاسَّا is not mentioned with فَإِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا (feeding sixty indigent), yet it is understood to be implied. The reason for not mentioning it is that this option is not the primary one, it is only its corollary; when it was mentioned with the primary one, it was not needed to be mentioned with the corollary.

The words ذَلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ mention the benefit of these directives: they have been given so that one's faith is strengthened in God and in His Prophet (sws). Here the word لِتُؤْمِنُوا as per common linguistic principles of Arabic denotes completeness, examples of which can be seen in previous *sūrahs*. If a person bears some hardship to atone for his mistake or shortcoming, then he not only atones for the mistake, it also reinforces him with regard to the real objective.

The words وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ sound a warning the way the words ذَلِكَ لَكُمْ تُوعِظُونَ بِهِ sounded a warning earlier: these are the limits set by God; a person should not dare cross them otherwise the consequence will be very grave.

The words وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ imply that those who cross the limits of God are disbelievers and a grievous punishment awaits them in the Hereafter. So unfortunate are people who in spite of claiming to be adherents to Islam join the disbelievers.

Some other questions do arise about *zihār*. However, they relate more to *fiqh* than to *tafsīr*. For this reason, I will not touch upon them. Those who want to look up the details should study books of *fiqh* to study these related issues.

Section II (Verses 5-11)

After the issue of *mujādalah-i ḥasan* (affectionate argument), the character of people who were inflicted with the ailment of *muḥāddah* (enmity with Islam and the Prophet (sws)) is mentioned. Though these people were apparently included among the Muslims, they were nurtured and supported by the Jews, and were working among the Muslims as their agents. Their special modus operandi was that they would start a whispering campaign against Islam and the Prophet (sws) among the

Muslims by making some excuse in order to shake their beliefs and to make them lose hope in the future of Islam. Here these connivances of theirs are unveiled, and they are warned that the Almighty is aware of each and every whisper of theirs and soon they will face its consequences. At the same time, Muslims are informed of various measures to protect themselves from their evil and to cleanse the gatherings of the Prophet (sws) from their whispering campaigns.

Readers may now proceed to recite these verses:

Text and Translation

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ كُبِتُوا كَمَا كُبِتَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ (٥) يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ (٦) أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرُ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (٧) أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَى ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَاجَوْنَ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَإِذَا جَاؤُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَيَقُولُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَيُشْسِ الْمَصِيرُ (٨) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ (٩) إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَى مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزَنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (١٠) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانْشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ (١١)

Those who are confronting God and His Messenger shall be humiliated the way those before them of their sort have been. And We have sent down clear warnings, and an utterly disgraceful torment awaits the disbelievers. They should remember the day when God raises them all to life and will inform them of all their deeds. God has counted these and they have forgotten them. And God is present near all things. (5-6)

Don't you understand that God knows everything which is in the heavens and the earth? Three men do not converse secretly except God is the fourth; neither between five except He is the sixth; whether fewer or more, wherever they be, He is with them. Then, on the Day of

Judgement, He will inform them of all their doings. Indeed, God has knowledge of all things. (7)

Have you not seen those who though forbidden to converse secretly do what they have been forbidden, and these people converse secretly of sin, transgression and disobedience to the Messenger. And when they come to you, they pay salutations to you in words which God does not greet you with, and say in their hearts: “Why does God not punish us for what we say?” Hell alone is sufficient for them. They shall enter it; Thus, it is an evil abode! (8)

Believers! When you converse secretly, do not converse of sin, transgression and disobedience to the Messenger; converse what is virtuous and pious. And fear God before whom you all shall be brought together. (9)

These secret conversations are from Satan so that he inflicts sorrow on the faithful. Yet he cannot harm them in any way except by the will of God. And let the faithful put their trust in God. (10)

Believers! Make room in your gatherings when you are bidden do so; God will make room for you. And when it is said: “get up,” then get up. God will elevate to high ranks those that have faith and knowledge among you. And God is fully cognizant of all that you do. (11)

Explanation

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ كُبِتُوا كَمَا كُبِتَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ⁵

The word مُحَادَّة means “conflict and enmity”. It is the opposite of مُوَادَّة. Both these words are used very aptly in one verse of the sūrah, and shed light on the meaning of one another: لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ (٥٨: ٢٢) (you shall not find people who believe in God and in the Last Day on friendly terms with those who oppose God and His Messenger, (58:22)).

In the previous paragraph, as is evident, the character of those people has been described who come only to God and His Prophet (sws) when they are faced with some hardship and affectionately plead before them. Now the character of people who though claimed to have faith yet opposed God and His Prophet (sws) is being portrayed. They would start a whispering campaign and clandestine propaganda against any directive of Islam which they felt was against their benefit and interest. Their objective would be to shake and unsettle the faith of sincere Muslims by

5. Those who are confronting God and His Messenger shall be humiliated the way those before them of their sort have been. And We have sent down clear warnings, and an utterly disgraceful torment awaits the disbelievers.

these evil promptings. All their sympathies, as will become evident later, were with the enemies of Islam, in particular the Jews. They were the agents of the Jews among the Muslims, and under their guidance would continually be on the look out to find an opportunity to harm the Muslims. Details of the turmoil they caused in the matters of ‘Ā’ishah (rta) and Zaynab (rta) have already been mentioned in Sūrah Nūr and Sūrah Ahzāb. The issue of *ḡihār* was also among the ones in which they could have made the concession given by the Qur’ān a target of objection in order to create misconceptions in the mind of simpletons. In the age of *jāhiliyyah*, as referred to before, *ḡihār* signified a permanent divorce between a husband and wife. These miscreants could have easily begun the whispering campaign that Islam had, God forbid, allowed its followers to contract marriage with their mothers. This situation required that these miscreants be totally unveiled so that any mischief they tried to spread could be curbed.

The word كَبَّتْ means “to destroy someone by humiliating him”. The verse كُتِبُوا كَمَا كُتِبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ says that these people will be doomed after being humiliated the way others, before them, of similar character were. The words وَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ (and We have sent down [in the Qur’ān] clear arguments to validate this claim) refer to the historical facts which have been mentioned in detail in the Qur’ān to show that those who oppose God’s prophets are ultimately humbled.

The words وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ say that for these disbelievers too a disgraceful punishment lies in store ultimately. The reference is to those disbelievers who were proactive in opposing the Prophet (sws). The verse says that they too will be humiliated eventually the way others like them before were. If their character is the same, there is no reason that their fate be different. The law of God is the same for all.

This warning of the Qur’ān materialized when the power of the Quraysh was also humbled, and the Jews too met their fate. At that time, no refuge remained for the Hypocrites who would indulge in intrigues under the patronage of the Jews. They met the same fate as their guides: the Jews. The succeeding *sūrahs* mention the details of the exemplary fate they met.

The punishment they were given has been called humiliating because they had to encounter punishments of execution, exile and slavery, and no one showed any sympathy to them; everyone, on the other hand, cursed them.

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ⁶

The accusative form of يَوْمَ can be because the words عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ mentioned in the previous verse; however, in my opinion, it is because of a suppressed verb as per common linguistic principles of Arabic. The implication is that whatever punishment will befall them will only be a prelude; they should also remember the day when the Almighty will raise them to life again and bring up before them their actions. The word جَمِيعًا points to the fact that all the components and motives of the conspiracies and whispering campaigns which are taking place today shall be gathered, and the Almighty will unveil to each person his secrets and inform him of who suggested what and who complied in what manner.

By the word فَيُنَبِّئُهُم obviously is implied its consequences: The Almighty will inform them of all their deeds so that they face their consequences.

The words أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ are meant to dispel a great misconception: people should not think that if they have forgotten everything they had done, the Almighty too will forget it. Since they were not punished because of their mischief, they thought that the Almighty too had forgotten it; in fact, the Almighty has noted each and every act of theirs, and has fixed a day for reward and punishment on which the good and evil deeds done by each person will come up before him.

The words وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ substantiate what is just said: The Almighty is not absent from anywhere; whatever happens in the heavens and the earth happens before Him and He is omnipresent.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرُ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ⁷

This is a further explanation of the fact that each and everything in the heavens and the earth is in the knowledge of God. He will present to each person all his deeds. The address أَلَمْ تَرَ is general in nature, and on this

6 They should remember the day when God raises them all to life and will inform them of all their deeds. God has counted these and they have forgotten them. And God is present near all things.

7. Don't you understand that God knows everything which is in the heavens and the earth? Three men do not converse secretly except God is the fourth; neither between five except He is the sixth; whether fewer or more, wherever they be, He is with them. Then, on the Day of Judgement, He will inform them of all their doings. Indeed, God has knowledge of all things.

occasion, this style refers to the fact that this is something which should be evident to everyone. When God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and when He alone is running all their affairs and each and every object moves because of His permission and because of His leave living beings continue to live, then how is it possible that He remain unaware of anything belonging to the heavens and the earth? In Sūrah Mulk, it is said: (وَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ ۖ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (67:14)).

The rest of the verse from *لَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ* to the end implies that when the knowledge of God is all-embracing, then these people who connive and whisper against God and His Prophet (sws) should remember that when three of them are conversing in private, the fourth is God, and when five of them are conversing in private, the sixth is God. Thus, whether less from this number or more God is necessarily present alongside them. The words *أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا* imply that these people should remember that wherever they converse in secret, God will be with them. They cannot find any place in the heavens and the earth in which they can hide from the omnipresent God.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَى ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَاجَوْنَ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَإِذَا جَاؤُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحْيِكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَيَقُولُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَيُتْسَمَّ الْمَصِيرُ⁸ (٨)

This verse expresses amazement at their state: they are repeatedly indulging in the very clandestine conversation from which they have been stopped. Moreover, they are audacious enough to indulge in secret conversation which is sinful and relates to transgression and disobedience to the Prophet (sws). They are neither ashamed on this nor have any fear of God.

It seems that when their whisperings began, the Almighty tried to stop them; however, they never desisted; in fact, their mischief only increased. Ultimately, these verses sounded a final warning to them.

The words *وَيَتَنَاجَوْنَ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ* express the fact that there is nothing good in their private conversation, even though such conversation can relate to good things, as is mentioned in the succeeding

8. Have you not seen those who though forbidden to converse secretly do what they have been forbidden, and these people converse secretly of sin, transgression and disobedience to the Messenger. And when they come to you, they pay salutations to you in words which God does not greet you with, and say in their hearts: "Why does God not punish us for what we say?" Hell alone is sufficient for them. They shall enter it; Thus, it is an evil abode!

verses. Their hearts are absolutely devoid of goodness. Thus their secret talks relate to sin, transgression and inciting people to rebellion against the Prophet (sws). The word **إِثْمٌ** (*ithm*) refers to sins in which the element of usurping rights is dominant, and **عُدْوَانٌ** (*'udwān*) refers to sins in which the element of transgression, rebellion and arrogance is dominant. When used together, these words embrace all types of sins.

The words **وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُولِ** express the real objective of these malicious campaigns of the miscreants: they want to incite Muslims to rebel against the Prophet (sws) in order to dismember their lot.

These Hypocrites, as has been indicated earlier, were nurtured and guided by the Jews. The purpose of all their activities was to create such mischief among the Companions (rta) that they were ruined before becoming an impregnable force. The details of this mischief are found in the previous *sūrahs* and will also be referred to in the coming ones. However, the Almighty humiliated them, and the faction of God which was organized by the training and education of the Prophet Muḥammad (sws) humbled all the enemies of the truth.

The words **وَإِذَا جَاؤُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحْيِكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ** state an example of the malice these miscreants have for the Prophet (sws). When they come to the Prophet (sws), they pay salutations to him in exactly the opposite words prescribed by God. God and His angels send mercy and peace on him,⁹ and these wretched people twist their tongues and instead of saying **السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ** (peace be to you) to him, say **السَّأْمُ عَلَيْكَ** (death be to you).

The words **بِمَا لَمْ يُحْيِكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ** are meant to express their callousness: what doubt remains of their wretchedness who pray for death of the holy person on whom the Almighty and the angels send peace and blessings? Also concealed in these words is assurance for the Prophet (sws): if these people desire death for him, then let them; for God desires mercy and His angels send blessings on him; so he should not care about what prayers these people make.

Examples of how the Jews and their agents would twist their tongues to distort words have been mentioned in Sūrah Baqarah. I have already described them in detail while explaining the words **رَاعَيْنَا** and **سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا** of verse 104.¹⁰ They would similarly twist their tongues to make **السَّلَامُ**

9. The words of 33:56 are:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا (٥٦:٣٣)

The Prophet is blessed by God and His angels. Bless him, then, you believers, and greet him with a worthy salutation. (33:56)

10. Amīn Aḥsan Islāhī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, vol. 1 250-252.

عَلَيْكَ sound like السَّامَ عَلَيْكَ and the listener would think that they have said the former whereas the matter would be the reverse.

The words وَيَقُولُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ refer to their delusion because of which they continued spreading mischief on not being chastened for it.

The Qur'ān says that since they are not immediately punished for their mischief, they think that they are correct in rejecting the Prophet (sws) and in making fun of him; they reckon that had he been the messenger of God, then they would necessarily have been punished for this conduct; however, since no such thing is happening, it means that his claim is only a bluff.

The words حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَيَنْسِفُ الْمَصِيرُ say that Hell is sufficient for such people in which they shall necessarily be cast, and what an evil abode it is. In its presence, if no punishment visits them in this world, then it does not matter. Hell suffices for every latitude given.

These miscreants are threatened of punishment not only in this world as is alluded to in verse five above and is also mentioned further ahead in the *sūrah*, but fact of the matter is that they have to face Hell, and there is no reason for them to rest assured if any of them is not seized in this world.

It should be kept in mind that the greatest thing which increases arrogance and rebelliousness in a person is the delusion mentioned above. When he observes that he is not being punished in this world for his mischief, he becomes assured that he will never be punished, and the warnings sounded by the preachers are mere blackmail; they have no reality. In fact, this is mere lack of vision. If the results of deeds become immediately evident to a person, who would dare to do evil? One would only adopt virtue; everyone would be pious and virtuous as a result. The real secret of this world is that it is not a place of reward and punishment; it is a place of trial and test. It is the Hereafter which is the place of reward and punishment, which is the most evident and indubitable fact of this universe. In its absence, the whole universe is rendered meaningless and purposeless and its creator a merry-maker. The fact of the matter is that he is not a merry-maker; He is an obviously powerful and wise being.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ (٩)¹¹

These verses inform the Muslims that *najwā* (secret conversation) in

11. Believers! When you converse secretly, do converse whisper of sin, transgression and disobedience to the Messenger; converse what is virtuous and pious. And fear God before whom you all shall be brought together.

itself is nothing bad. There are a lot of occasions in our social lives when the need to mutually consult one another arises. Consultation is one of the foundations of collective life, and it may also need to be kept a secret. If such a consultation relates to virtue, piety and mutual correction and reformation, then it is a means of blessing. So whenever Muslims consult in secret, they should do so for a noble purpose. However, secret consultation in which the Hypocrites indulge and which relates to sin, transgression and disobedience to the Prophet (sws) is satanic in nature. Believers should abstain from it and keep fearing the God in Whose presence everyone will be gathered, and Who is fully aware of their secret consultations, as is stated earlier.

إِنَّمَا التَّجْوَى مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ¹²(١٠)

This verse assures the sincere believers that the source of all these secret conversations of the Hypocrites is the incitement of Satan, and what best Satan can do is to inflict some sorrow and grief on the hearts of the Muslims. He can do nothing beyond this. Without the permission of God, he cannot harm people; so the believers should disregard these evil suggestions and provocations of Satan and adhere to their stance; they should trust God that He will protect them from the mischief of every miscreant.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانْشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ¹³(١١)

These secret conversations of the Hypocrites would take place in every place and gathering, however they would specially indulge in them in the gatherings of the Prophet (sws) because it was here that they found the greatest opportunities to cast aspersions on Islam, to inflict sorrow and dismay in the hearts and to make fun and show disrespect to the Prophet

12. These secret conversations are from Satan so that he inflicts sorrow on the faithful. Yet he cannot harm them in any way except by the will of God. And let the faithful put their trust in God.

13. Believers! Make room in your gatherings when you are bidden do so; God will make room for you. And when it is said: “get up,” then get up. God will elevate to high ranks those that have faith and knowledge among you. And God is fully cognizant of all that you do.

(sws). Consequently, they would sit in groups in these gatherings and would not allow others to sit among them so that they could easily and freely comment on the conversation of the Prophet (sws). At times, when he would leave these gatherings or when the end of these gatherings would be announced, they would keep sitting to accomplish their evil objectives; in this way, they would get the opportunity to spread evil suggestions among the people present or make schemes of some new trick. This situation called for some directives for the gatherings of the Prophet (sws) so that the Hypocrites could be stopped from their satanic whisperings.

It is evident from the context that the word *مَجْلِسٍ* in *إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا* refers primarily to the gatherings of the Prophet (sws); however, since the word is used in its plural form in the verse, the purpose is to guide Muslims to manners and etiquette they should observe in all gatherings so that each of their gatherings becomes a reflection of the gatherings of the Prophet (sws). Similarly, at some instances, the word *مساجد* used is in the plural form; though it primarily refers to the Baytullāh as in (١٨ : ٩) *إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ* yet since the word occurs in the plural what is intended to be conveyed is that the guidance given relates to all mosques because they are subservient to this great mosque.

The implication is that when the head of the gathering directs the people to sit with spaces between them, then this directive should be obeyed without any hesitation and people should sit at a distance from each other so that it is easier for others who would join to sit comfortably and it becomes difficult for the Hypocrites to sit together and indulge in whispering. I have stated earlier that the Hypocrites would sit closely together in the form of a group in the gatherings of the Prophet (sws) so that no one from outside them was able to infiltrate their groups; this would make it easier for them to show whatever response they wanted without any external interference; in this way, they would also be able to conceal their whisperings, gestures and sarcastic comments. At times, with this attitude they were able to create a lot of commotion the details of which can be seen in history books and the Qur'ān has also referred to them. At the time of revelation of this *sūrah*, their mischief had spread a lot. In order to curb it, it was told that when the head of the gathering asks people to sit at a distance, then this directive should be obeyed without any hesitation.

The words *فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ* say that if people make room for others, the Almighty will make room for them. The apparent sense of these words is that the Almighty will create room for them in Paradise; however, the truth of the matter is for the person who widens his heart for others, the Almighty widens the hearts of others for him. Every deed of a person whether apparent or hidden, good or evil has a natural

impact; its true manifestation will take place in the Hereafter yet its consequences are also seen in this world as well provided a person has eyes to see them.

The words *وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانْشُرُوا* say that if in a similar manner, the head of the gathering asks for people to disperse, then this directive too should be obeyed without any hesitation and without any feeling of inferiority.

The nature of this directive can be individual as well as collective. The implication is that when all the gathering is dispersed, people should whole-heartedly accept this, and should not think that they have been disgraced or that the Prophet's personal comfort has been given preference to a need of the collectivity and that they were not allowed to express themselves.

Similarly, if a person is individually asked to get up and sit at some other place or leave the gathering or give up his place to someone else, then he should obey this directive without complaining. If out of respect for the collective system he behaves in this altruistic manner, the Almighty will accept his sacrifice and elevate him as a result.

The words *فَانْشُرُوا يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ* occur in contrast to *فَافْسَحُوا لِكُلِّ لَكُمْ*. Even if this standing up and giving up one's place may seemingly be humiliating, the Almighty will make this a means of elevation for the believers.

The words *الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ* here are very meaningful. The implication is that the Hypocrites who have infiltrated in the ranks of the Muslims will definitely raise objections against such a directive; they will regard giving space to others by getting up as tantamount to disgracing them. Some of them would even think that they are inferior to others with regard to knowledge and deeds because of which they have been given preference over them; however, men of knowledge and the faithful who will whole-heartedly obey this directive will be greatly rewarded in the Hereafter by the Almighty.

The words assure the men of knowledge and faith that the Almighty is aware of all their deeds. In order to become aware of them, He does not need that an advertisement of their deeds and services be published in newspapers. Whatever sacrifice they make for the betterment of faith and the Muslim *ummah* and for the respect of the collectivity is fully in the knowledge of God and He will duly reward them for this.

Though this etiquette has been spelled out for the gatherings of the Prophet (sws), it should be observed in all gatherings, as has been indicated earlier. Today while blindly following the West, the ways which have been adopted are regarded to be very modern and developed, however, it is because of them that our parliaments and council have become more of places of duels. In them, various parties form factions

only to defeat one another, make evil gestures, indulge in secret conversation and pass sarcastic remarks. At times, matters reach the extent that they even engage in brawls and hurl shoes and chairs at one another and the leader of the house, instead of reminding them of congregational etiquette, has to seek the help of the police.

Section III (Verses 12-13)

Just as in the previous verses, certain measures have been suggested to shield prophetic meetings from clandestine talks, in the same manner, in the succeeding verses a measure has been suggested in order to shield the person of the Prophet (sws) from the evil of those who indulge in these clandestine talks. When this mischief spread and the Qur'ān condemned it, many Hypocrites started having long meetings with the Prophet (sws) to try to prove themselves to be innocent and to incriminate others for their own crimes. These people did not have the courage to do this in open gatherings and hence each of them would try to meet the Prophet (sws) in private. This situation demanded that certain restrictions be imposed on meeting him in private so that each person should not waste his time. This was an emergency directive. When the objective was achieved, this directive was abrogated and the abrogated verses were placed right before the abrogating ones so that one does not have any difficulty in appreciating the coherence in the discourse.

Readers may now continue to study the succeeding verses.

Text and Translation

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَظْهَرُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (١٢) أَشْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (١٣)

Believers! When you intend to confer in secret with the Messenger, give some charity before such conversation. This is best and more noble for you. But if you lack the means, God is Forgiving and Merciful. (12)

Have you become apprehensive that you will have to give in charity before conversing secretly with him? So, when you did not do this, and God had mercy on you, then be diligent in the prayer and pay the *zakāh* and show obedience to God and His Messenger. And God is well aware of all that you do. (13)

Explanation

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ جَوَاسِكُمْ صَدَقَةً ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَظْهَرُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (١٢) ¹⁴

As indicated before, this directive was given at the time when the epidemic of a whispering campaign was at its height; the purpose was to stop the Hypocrites from interfering with the cherished time of the Prophet (sws). When these people were taken to task for this attitude, each one of them wanted to meet the Prophet (sws) in private to satisfy him with his obsequious talk, and if possible to attribute the burden of his sins to some other person. Since the Prophet (sws) had not imposed any condition on meeting in private, such selfish people would take undue advantage of his generosity. In this period also, they must have tried to specially take advantage of it. For this reason, a condition was imposed on them by the Almighty: anyone who wanted to meet him in private to talk secretly with him, would first have to spend in charity in the way of God. The indigent were exempted from this directive so that this should not become a burden for the poor among the Muslims. Similarly, the amount of charity was also not determined so that people should not feel its burden.

The real purpose of this directive, as indicated earlier, was to discourage the ever-increasing campaign of whispering and secret conversation launched by the Hypocrites. They were generally plagued with the malady of greed and stinginess. The Qur'ān has pointed out this malady of theirs at various places. For this reason, the Qur'ān imposed this condition so that meeting the Prophet (sws) in private became a serious affair. Such people because of their miserliness would in the first place not even have the courage to do it, and if they did, their spending became a means of their spiritual purification and they were blessed with the urge to refrain from mischief.

The words *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ جَوَاسِكُمْ صَدَقَةً ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَظْهَرُ* state the purpose of this directive: if they sincerely followed it, it would become a means for their betterment and success both in this world and in the Hereafter, and a source of cleansing their hearts. Thus the words also indicate that this directive was not given for the personal comfort of the Prophet (sws); it was meant to show them the path to success and salvation provided they gave it due importance.

The words *فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ* say that as before the poor and the indigent can continue to meet the Prophet (sws) in private for their conversation without any such restriction.

14. Believers! When you confer in secret with the Messenger, give some charity before such conversation. This is best and more noble for you. But if you lack the means, God is Forgiving and Merciful.

أَشْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (١٣)¹⁵

This verse was revealed some time later to abrogate the previous directive mentioned in the preceding one. It was placed right after the previous verse in the middle of the *sūrah* so that the abrogated and abrogating verses are adjacent to one another. Obviously, a period of time must have elapsed between the two verses that the objective of the initial directive would have been fulfilled; in other words, the mischief of secret conversations of the Hypocrites must have ceased for which the above-mentioned directive of paying charity before meeting the Prophet (sws) had been revealed. Some exegetical narratives show that the two verses were just separated by morning and evening. Probably, the reason for this could be that both verses occur adjacent to one another. However, this cannot be the reason for saying that there is little or no difference between the time of revelation of the two verses. There are examples found in the Qur'ān such that the abrogating verse was revealed after sometime; however, it was placed right after the abrogated verse. A very clear example of this exists in Sūrah Muzzammil.

As explained earlier, the restriction imposed on meeting the Prophet (sws) in private was given in a certain period of time and was meant to curb a specific type of mischief. This restriction must have been lifted when this mischief had been checked or when the feeling of abstaining from it arose in the people. This purpose cannot be achieved in a few hours. Some time must have necessarily elapsed, and for this reason there must be such time difference between the two directives as is necessary to achieve an objective.

It is evident from the words *أَشْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ* that the increasing tendency of speaking in private with the Prophet (sws) was curtailed after this directive. The Hypocrites must have desisted because of their miserliness, while the sincere must have desisted not only due to their poverty but also because they must have realized that the Almighty does not approve of conversing in private with the Prophet (sws). Nevertheless when the objective of giving this contingent directive was fulfilled, it was abrogated.

What is firstly evident from the words *فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ* is that

15. Have you become apprehensive that you will have to give in charity before conversing secretly with him? So, when you did not do this, and God had mercy on you, then be diligent in the prayer and pay the *zakāh* and show obedience to God and His Messenger. And God is well aware of all that you do.

neither did the people dare to talk in private with the Prophet (sws) nor did the event of paying charity for it arise. The second thing which is evident from it is that people generally felt ashamed that what they had hitherto been doing was not approved by God, and for this reason they were rebuked by Him. The expression تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ means “God accepted your repentance”. Obviously, this acceptance by God must have been after they had proved worthy of it by being ashamed of this behaviour. It is possible that there could have been some hard-hearts who did not take heed even after this warning; however, it is evident from the verse that generally people were ashamed of their behaviour. It is the practice too of the Almighty that when a good sentiment is found in most individuals of a community, He values this attitude. Consequently, the restriction was lifted.

The words فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ are said as a caution: though the restriction has been lifted, yet as a watchful measure Muslims must specially be diligent in the prayer, in paying *zakāh* and in obeying the Prophet (sws) so that the society does not face any more crisis and Satan is not provided with another opportunity to spread the menace of whispering.

Section IV (Verses 14-22)

The abrogating and abrogated verses which came in between were of the genre of a parenthetical sentence. As soon as they ended, the discourse once again returns to the discussion regarding the Hypocrites. It is said that their real association is not with Islam; it lies with the Jews, who are the enemies of Islam. They befriend them, and on the basis of their false oaths have infiltrated among the Muslims. Their real malady is love for this world because of which they have become accomplices of Satan, and it is the inalterable verdict of God that He and His messengers shall always prevail and the faction of Satan will be vanquished. Faith in God cannot be combined with friendship with the enemies of religion. True believers are those who sever all ties with such people even if they are their close relatives. It is they who are the faction of God, and only they will succeed.

In the light of this background, readers may now proceed to the next section of verses.

Text and Translation

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَّا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ وَيَحْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ (١٤) أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (١٥)

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ (١٦) لَنْ تَغْنِي عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ (١٧) يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ (١٨) اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ (١٩) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادِّثُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ (٢٠) كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ (٢١) لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (٢٢)

Have you not seen those who befriend people who incurred the wrath of God? They belong neither to you nor to them. And they intentionally swear to falsehood. God has prepared for them a grievous torment. Evil indeed is that which they are doing. They use their oaths as a shield, and have desisted from the path of God. So a humiliating punishment awaits them. (14-16)

Their wealth and children shall in no way be able to protect them from God. They are the inmates of Hell. They shall abide in it forever. On the day when God raises them all to life, they will swear to Him as they now swear to you and will think that they have a basis. Be informed that they are absolute liars. Satan has gained possession of them. Thus he has made them forget God's remembrance. They are the faction of Satan; Listen up! The faction of Satan will surely be the losers. (17-19)

Those who oppose God and His Messenger, it is they who shall be humiliated. God has decreed: "I Myself and My Messengers will surely triumph." Indeed, God is Powerful and Mighty. (20-21)

You shall not find any community who believes in God and in the Last Day on friendly terms with those who oppose God and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or even their family. It is these people in whose hearts God has stamped faith, and strengthened them with a special blessing of His own. And He will admit them to gardens watered by running streams, where they shall dwell forever. God is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. They are the faction of God: and listen up! God's faction will surely triumph. (22)

Explanation

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ وَيَحْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ (١٤)¹⁶

This is an expression of wonder on these Hypocrites; on the one hand, they are friends to those who have incurred the wrath of God, and on the other hand, they testify on oath that they are with the Muslims. The fact of the matter is that they are neither with those who have incurred God's wrath nor with the Muslims. They are not with the Muslims because professing faith in God and His Prophet (sws) in simultaneity with befriending the enemies of God are two opposites; they can never exist together. They are also not with those who have incurred God's wrath because their friendship revolves around their own interest. If they are faced with trying circumstances, these Hypocrites will never be ready to bear any assault and will only declare their dissociation like Satan.

The words وَيَحْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ say that they fully know that they are with no one except with their interests; however, by swearing false oaths they want to please both the Muslims and these people.

The words غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ refer to the Jews who are alluded to by the words مَعْصُوبٍ عَلَيْهِمْ in the very first *sūrah* of the Qur'ān. Though these Hypocrites were also friendly with the Idolaters of Makkah, the details of which will be found in the coming *sūrahs*, however, here reference is specifically to their friendship with the Jews. I have indicated earlier that these Hypocrites were primarily reared and guided by the Jews, and had infiltrated among the Muslims as their agents.

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (١٥)¹⁷

The implication of the verse is that these unfortunate people think that they have behaved very wisely by satisfying both through their oaths; In actual fact, this is not a wise policy they have adopted; it is a perilous game that they are playing. As a result of it, the Almighty has prepared a very grievous punishment for them which they will face. They will encounter the punishment in this world reserved for the enemies of God and His Prophet (sws) besides the punishment of the Hereafter.

16. Have you not seen those who befriend people who incurred the wrath of God? They belong neither to you nor to them. And they intentionally swear to falsehood.

17. God has prepared for them a grievous torment. Evil indeed is that which they are doing.

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ¹⁸

These Hypocrites have made their oaths as their shields. Whenever they are called to account on any of their mistakes, they make use of their fake oaths to assure others of their innocence, and in this way they think that they have saved themselves. They have sought refuge in these oaths in order to save themselves from the demands of religion. They have retracted from the step they had taken for the cause of God by declaring faith, and now instead of moving forward, they want to feign religiosity by swearing oaths; however, till when will they be able to continue with this? At last, they will have to face a humiliating punishment.

The word صَدَّ is used both transitively and intransitively. Here it is used in the latter sense implying that they have desisted from moving towards God.

لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ¹⁹

This verse refers to the yokes which have hampered their advance towards God: they have been lured away by the love of their wealth and of their wives and children, and for this reason they are not finding in them the courage to proceed to the path of religion. They do not know that their wealth and children will not be able to save them in the slightest of ways from the torment of God. The governing noun (*mudāf*) is ellipsed in the expression: مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ. ie. مِنَ اللَّهِ. The implication is that if they remain entrapped in the love of their wealth and children in this way, then this thing will lead them to Hell where they will abide forever.

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ أَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ²⁰

If these people keep running from the demands of their faith while being lured away by the love of wealth and children, then they should remember the day when God will raise them and their children, and on

18. They use their oaths as a shield, and have desisted from the path of God. So a humiliating punishment awaits them.

19. Their wealth and children shall in no way be able to protect them from God. They are the inmates of Hell. They shall abide in it forever.

20. On the day when God raises them all to life, they will swear to Him as they now swear to you and will think that they have a basis. Be informed that they are absolute liars.

that day too they will have no refuge but their false oaths on which they depend today. On that day, they will swear oaths to exonerate themselves from blame the way they are today swearing oaths before the Muslims. It is mentioned in verse 23 of Sūrah An‘ām that when the Idolaters will see their imminent punishment, they will swear to their innocence: **قَالُوا وَاللَّهِ رَبَّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ** (۲۳:۶) (By God! Our Lord, we were never among those who worshipped other gods. (6:23))

The implication of the words **وَيَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ** is that by swearing false oaths they will think that they have furnished a very strong argument in favour of their innocence, and will think that just as in this world they had deceived many people through their false oaths, this deception of theirs will also work in the Hereafter; however, their deception will be of no avail to them. On that day, the Almighty will seal the tongues of the criminals, and their hands and feet and other limbs will themselves bear witness to their crimes after which no possibility of offering any excuse by anyone will remain.

The words **أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ** say that everyone should listen that if anyone has regarded them to be veritable, he should dispel this thought. They are the real liars, and have deceived others in this world because of their lies and in the Hereafter too will be audacious enough to try to deceive God.

اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ (۱۹)²¹

The expression **اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ** means **تَسَلَّطَ عَلَيْهِمْ**. Satan has taken complete hold of them. People who are seized by Satan become indifferent to God because of him, and those who forget God become members of the faction of Satan. Here one should remember that as far as implanting evil suggestions is concerned, Satan tries to attack every person through them; however, only those who open their hearts to them, and regard Satan to be their guide and counsel are led away by these suggestions. The hearts of those who become his disciples in this way become devoid of God's remembrance, and they entrust their reins to Satan while disregarding the Hereafter. All such people become members of Satan's faction and Satan becomes their leader; he makes them wander wherever he wants them to. The real protection of a person

21. Satan has gained possession of them. Thus he has made them forget God's remembrance. They are the faction of Satan; Listen up! The faction of Satan will surely be the losers.

is God's remembrance. After being deprived of it, he is lured away by Satan and then he does not find a way to escape from his clutches.

The words *أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ* signify that though every person has been given a period of respite in this world as per the law of the Almighty and as a result even the faction of Satan has this time to spread whatever mischief it can, yet everyone must know that ultimately the faction of Satan is destined to doom.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ (٢٠)²²

The real work of Satan's faction is to oppose God and His Prophet (sws) and to show rivalry to them. The verse says that the more respite they are given, the more they show antagonism against God and His Prophet (sws); however, they will end up among those who had been humiliated earlier on by showing this attitude.

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ (٢١)²³

The Almighty has declared his established practice in this verse which He has ordained from the very beginning: in the struggle between God and the Prophet (sws) and between the faction of Satan, God and His Prophets shall always prevail. The faction of Satan will be humiliated. I have explained this established practice of God at a number of places in this *tafsīr* that every messenger (*rasūl*) (as opposed to *nabī* (prophet)) sent by God to his people is a symbol of divine justice. He necessarily decides their fate in this world. If collectively these people denied their messenger, the Almighty destroyed them through some natural calamity after sifting out the messenger and those who professed faith in him. In case the believers were in substantial numbers, then after conclusive communication of the truth to the people, the believers were asked to wage war against them and shatter their power so that the world is cleansed of their mischief. It is evident from the history of messengers presented by the Qur'ān that most messengers encountered the first of the above-mentioned situation: after migration of the messenger and companions, a torment befell the people. It was only in the case of Muḥammad (sws) that the second situation arose: after migration he was directed to wage *jihād*, and his companions were humbled by the swords of his companions until they were totally routed.

22. Those who oppose God and His Messenger, it is they who shall be humiliated.

23. God has decreed: "I Myself and My messengers will surely triumph." Indeed, God is Powerful and Mighty.

The words إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ substantiate the premise why God and His messengers should necessarily prevail. God is not a weak being: He is Powerful and Mighty. When He sends His messenger to His people, then that messenger is His envoy who comes to people to inform them of the directives of their real king. If people rise to obey the directives of their real master, they are granted sovereignty by Him in the land and are blessed with His favours. On the other hand, if they take to opposing God, they are regarded as rebels, and once the truth is conclusively communicated to them, the Almighty cleanses the earth of them.

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (٢٢) 24

Here at the end, a very clear standard is put forth before the Hypocrites so that no confusion remains between the faction of God and the faction of Satan, and whoever they choose, they can do so by conscious consideration. The implication is that they can only adopt one of the two. It is not possible that they side with both at the same time. The verse says that it is impossible that a people believe in God and in the Hereafter and then befriend people who oppose God and His messenger. If a group befriends such people and also claims faith, then it is not true to this claim at all. The reason is that both these are opposites and cannot co-exist. A person only has one heart not two and he cannot harbour two opposing and contradictory things in one heart.

The words وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ signify that what to speak of other relations, even the father, the son, the brother and other close of relatives of the family to whom a person has a natural affiliation also do not have the status that they can have a place in his heart if they oppose his faith.

The words أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ say that people who

24. You shall not find any community who believes in God and in the Last Day on friendly terms with those who oppose God and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or even their family. It is these people in whose hearts God has stamped faith, and strengthened them with a special blessing of His own. And He will admit them to gardens watered by running streams, where they shall dwell forever. God is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. They are the faction of God: and listen up! God's faction will surely triumph.

are ready to evaluate themselves or who let others evaluate them as per this standard are in fact the very people in whose hearts the Almighty has etched faith and has helped them with a special spiritual blessing of His. As far as people who claim to be adherents to faith, and also have ties with the enemies of God and His messenger are concerned, they are Muslims in name only; their hearts are not conversant with the faith.

The words وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ refer to the fact that a person's relationship with his father, son, brother, family and tribe is deeply rooted in his heart. It is not easy at all to sever it. However, when people whose hearts are alive with the sanctity and honour of faith are faced with such a delicate trial, the Almighty helps them with His special spiritual blessings, and they come out of this test with flying colours:

فيض روح القدس ارباز مدد فرمايد
ديگران هم بکنند آنچه مسيحا کرد

(If the blessings of the Holy Spirit are at hand, then a person can do what Jesus was able to.)

It was as a result of this spiritual blessing that in the battle of Uḥud, Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ (rta) raised his sword against his father 'Abdullāh al-Jarrāḥ, Abū Bakr (rta) challenged his son in the battle of Badr, Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr killed his brother 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr, 'Umar (rta) killed his maternal uncle 'Āṣ ibn Hishām, and 'Alī (rta), Ḥamzah (rta) and Abū 'Ubaydah (rta) sent 'Utbah, Shaybah and Walīd ibn 'Utbah respectively to the gallows.

The words وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا signify that these people were blessed by God with strong faith and spiritual gains and made them persevere in the path of truth and after their death will be admitted by Him to Paradise where they will abide forever.

The words رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ depict the greatest reward they will reap. The Almighty will be pleased with them because they duly fulfilled the obligations of the faith they laid claim to and passed in each trial they were put through and they displayed the very character in all the trials that the Almighty required of them. For this reason, the Almighty will congratulate them on the fact that He is happy with them. They did what He wanted them to do. They will now get from God whatever they desire.

The fact that they were pleased with God means that the promises on which they lived and died in this world will be fulfilled in a far better manner than what they expected or imagined, and as a result they will be

very happy because all their desires will be fulfilled.

The words *أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ* say that it is these people who will be worthy of being counted among the faction of God, and it is they only who will succeed. The characteristics of the faction of Satan have been delineated earlier. Now with the mention of the faction of God, this *sūrah* comes to its end. *فَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ* (gratitude be to God for this) and *اللَّهُمَّ أَرِنَا الْحَقَّ حَقًّا وَارْزُقْنَا إِتِّبَاعَهُ وَأَرِنَا الْبَاطِلَ بَاطِلًا وَارْزُقْنَا اجْتِنَابَهُ* (God! Show us the truth the way it is and make us follow it and show us falsehood the way it is and make us abstain from it.)

Raḥmānābād,

10th January, 1978 AD

29th Muḥarram al-Ḥarām, 1398 AH
